

The First 50 Women in Idaho Law

JEAN RYND URANGA

September 30, 1975



Jean Rynd Uranga was born on September 30, 1949, in West Point, New York. Her father, John Rynd, was a Navy physician stationed at West Point and her mother, Gloria, a homemaker. Uranga has two sisters and a brother. When she was two years old, Uranga's father was transferred to the Navy's facility in Bremerton, Washington. Thus, Uranga grew up and went to school in Bremerton, graduating from East High School in 1967.

Although most of her girlfriends did not go to college, Uranga wanted to attend college and was encouraged by her family to do so. In the late 1960s, women who wanted to attend college were encouraged to become teachers or nurses. In 1967, Uranga attended Olympic Junior College in Bremerton, Washington, and after two years, transferred to Western Washington State College in Bellingham, Washington. Her major area of study was Sociology-Anthropology and her minor area was elementary education. Uranga graduated *cum laude* with a Bachelor's degree in education from Western Washington State College in 1971, having earned spots on both the President's and Dean's lists. Thereafter, she decided to stay an extra year doing post-graduate work at Western Washington State College and worked at the library.

While at Western Washington State College, Uranga dated a man who was taking the LSAT exam. And, as she explains things, decided to take the exam herself on a dare to see how she would do relative to her boyfriend. Although the two later broke off their relationship, Uranga scored well on the LSAT and decided to apply to law schools.

In 1972, Uranga began law school at Willamette University, College of Law in Salem, Oregon as one of about ten women in her class of 125. On the first day of class, Uranga met Louis Uranga, a man she would later marry during spring break of their third year of law school. Uranga was very active in law school, participating in the Moot Court Board, Phi Delta Phi, as the second-year class Secretary-Treasurer, on the Willamette Legal Aid Steering Committee, and Student Bar Association Budget Committee. She was also academically successful, receiving a Trustees' scholarship and the Multnomah County Bar Auxiliary scholarship. Uranga graduated law school in 1975 and decide to move to Boise because; Uranga says laughingly now, "That's the only place Louie wanted to live."

Uranga was admitted to the Idaho State Bar on her twenty-sixth birthday, September 30, 1975. She immediately began work as a Deputy Attorney General in the Consumer Protection/Business Regulation Division of the Office of the Attorney General for the State of Idaho, giving her a wide range of experience in consumer protection actions, drafting proposed legislation, dealing with the press and giving speeches to community groups on the Idaho Consumer Protection Act and other consumer related laws, and working on antitrust investigations. Uranga also represented the Idaho State Board of Medicine in administrative, disciplinary and other legal matters. She was also given the opportunity to work on a couple of "special" projects, such as researching and writing an article entitled "Idaho and the Oregon Consumer Protection Act:

Administrative Powers of the Attorney General” and the *Idaho Open Meeting Law Manual* (used and distributed by the Idaho Attorney General).

After five years with the Attorney General’s office, Uranga decided to leave the office in July 1980 and start her own practice with her husband in Boise. Their firm, Uranga & Uranga, is active today and handles a variety of general practice matters, with an emphasis in domestic relations, mediation and administrative law. In 1993, Uranga received mediation training from both the state and federal courts. She has acted as a Hearing Officer in almost 400 cases for various state and local administrative agencies in both contested cases and administrative rule proceedings, and has mediated over 550 cases.

Uranga has always been very active in the Bar. In 1977, she began volunteering with the Bar to assist in Bar Exam grading, an activity she helped with for 13 years. Uranga also assisted numerous Bar activities over the years, including the Boise Bar’s CLE programs (1981-1983), as a member of the Boise Bar Association, the Guardian Ad Litem Committee, the Bar Group Insurance Committee, the Bar Disciplinary Committee (1983-1986), and the Fee Dispute Panel (1996-2000). In 1987, Uranga received the Service Award from the Idaho State Bar.

Uranga served as a Commissioner from the Fourth Judicial District on the Idaho State Bar’s Board of Commissioners (the governing body of the Idaho State Bar) from 1990 to 1993. As such, she became the second woman to hold title of President of the Idaho State Bar in 1992 (Kaye O’Riordan, in 1988, was the first woman to hold this title). Years later, in 2001, Uranga succeeded to the Presidency of the Idaho Law Foundation, making her the first woman to hold both titles of President of the Idaho State Bar and President of the Idaho Law Foundation.

Given her many years of service to the community and the bar, in 2003, the Idaho State Bar awarded Uranga with its Professionalism Award, which is given to an attorney who “has engaged in extraordinary activity in his or her community, in the state, or in the profession, which reflects the highest standards of professionalism.”

Uranga continues to work and live in Boise with her husband and is the proud mother of two children. Her daughter, Maite, is currently in her second year of law school at Lewis & Clark in Portland, after graduating from Notre Dame and serving two years in the Peace Corps in Africa. Her son, Mark, is a graduate of Dartmouth College and is currently finishing his third year of medical school at the University of Washington.